

THE  
Complete Bird-Fancier,

OR  
*Bird-Fancier's Recreation.*

CONTAINING  
The very best INSTRUCTIONS for  
TAKING, CATCHING, FEEDING,  
BREEDING, and REARING,  
All Sorts of SONG-BIRDS;

PARTICULARLY,  
Canary-Birds, | Sterlings,  
Nightingales, | Linnets,  
Larks, | Goldfinches,  
Black-Birds, | Bullfinches,  
Thrushes, | Robins, &c.

TOGETHER WITH  
An Account of all their Distempers, and the  
best Methods of curing them. Also the  
surest Means of distinguishing the Cock  
from the Hen, and of learning them to  
sing to the greatest Perfection.

---

By GEORGE WRIGHT, who has made the rearing Birds  
his Diversion near Twenty Years.

---

The Lovers of Harmony reading this Book,  
May the Moments of Pleasure prolong,  
For here we are taught by the Feather and Look,  
To judge of the Bird and the Song.

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. COOKE, at *Shakespear's-Head* in  
*Pater-Noster-Row.* [Price One Shilling.]



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# P R E F A C E.

*T*HERE having been long since published, several Treatises of Hunting, Hawking, Fowling, and Fishing, but none of SONG-BIRDS, (at least, none wholly treating thereof) I have here presented those who have a fancy this way, with one, collected not only from what has been hitherto scatteringly published concerning them, but from diligent observations of my own, and confirmed by the experience of others I have conversed with, who have been curious in the breeding and bringing them up. And as nothing magnifies and sets forth the power of the great Creator more than these pretty harmless Animals, whether we reflect on their velocity, beauty, or the variegated colours of their feathers: so that, in every respect, they raise infinite

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delight

delight and satisfaction to their keepers, and sweetly recompence their trouble and change in bringing them up, by their pleasant harmony. You enjoy in your houses or aviaries, all the melody of the woods. I shall not pretend to answer a common objection, which some austere men (pretending to more humanity than their neighbours) make against the confining of Song-birds in cages, &c. but by producing St. John as an example, who certainly thought it no crime,—if he had, he would not have confined a tame partridge to divert himself withal. But certain it is, by this means numbers of these pretty creatures are nourished and protected from the inclemency of the weather, and preserved from the ravenous appetites of birds of prey.

I have little to say of the Book, but hope it will recommend itself by the many uncommon observations in it, the like, in all respects, not being hitherto published.

THE

CONTENTS.

OF the Nightingale	page 9
Concerning their Food	15
How to find their Nest and take it	17
The Wood-Lark	19
How to take them in January	22
To know the Cock from the Hen	24
A pleasant Story of the Wood-Lark	
and Nightingale	26
The Sky-Lark	28
How to Feed them	29
To know the Cock from the Hen	31
To take Branchers or Pushers	32
The Brancher	33
To take them in Flight	34
The Tit-Lark	37
The Robin-Red-Breast	40
A 3	What

# vi CONTENTS.

<i>What Diseases Robin-Red-Breasts are subject to, and how to cure them</i>	43
<i>The Wren</i>	44
<i>To know the Cock from the Hen</i>	43
<i>The large Tom-Tit, by some called Joe-Bent</i>	44
<i>The Red-Start</i>	ib.
<i>The Black-Bird</i>	45
<i>To know the Cock from the Hen</i>	47
<i>The Thrush, in some Countries called the Throistle</i>	48
<i>The Sterling</i>	50
<i>To know the Cock from the Hen</i>	52
<i>The Sparrow</i>	ib.
<i>To know the Cock from the Hen</i>	53
<i>The Linnet</i>	54
<i>How to feed them</i>	55
<i>To know the Cock from the Hen</i>	56
<i>How to catch Branchers</i>	57
<i>How to stop a Linnet, or any other Bird, and make them sing, after they have moulted off</i>	58
<i>The Goldfinch</i>	60
<i>To cure them when sick</i>	63
<i>To know the Cock from the Hen</i>	ib.
<i>The</i>	

# C O N T E N T S.    vii

ts	<i>The Bullfinch</i>	64
re	<i>To find their nests</i>	ib.
43	<i>How to feed them</i>	65
44	<i>To know the Cock from the Hen</i>	66
43	<i>The Chaffinch</i>	67
led	<i>To know the Cock from the Hen</i>	68
44	<i>The Green-Bird</i>	69
ib.	<i>The Aberdevine</i>	ib.
45	<i>The Twite</i>	70
47	<i>The Red-Pole</i>	ib.
led	<i>The Canary Bird</i>	71
48	<i>How to chuse a Canary Bird, and</i>	
50	<i>to know whether he hath a good</i>	
52	<i>song</i>	72
ib.	<i>To chuse a Bird in health</i>	73
53	<i>To chuse a Bird for song</i>	75
54	<i>To know a Cock from a Hen</i>	77
55	<i>Concerning the Canary-Birds, when</i>	
56	<i>they begin to build, or those you</i>	
57	<i>intend for breeding</i>	80
ther	<i>How to order them to make their</i>	
fter	<i>nests</i>	84
58	<i>Of the several Distempers incident to</i>	
60	<i>Canary Birds, and how to cure</i>	
63	<i>them</i>	85
ib.		
The	<i>Several</i>	

viii C O N T E N T S.

<i>Several extraordinary Remedies for the Dyslembers before-mentioned</i>	87
<i>To order them when in Moults</i>	89
<i>The Red Bird</i>	92

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Shillings neatly bound)

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O R,  
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Methods of Fighting them. Of Rearing and Backing Colts.  
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sants, and all manner of Game. Of Shooting, and of Shoot-  
ing flying, &c.

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merous to be mentioned in this Advertisement.

By THOMAS FAIRFAX, Esq.

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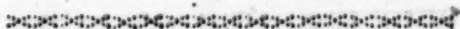
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T H E

# Complete Bird-Fancier.



*Of the* NIGHTINGALE.

**T**HIS Bird is in general thought to be the best of Song-birds; and the strength and sweetness of his voice to exceed that of any other. He will sing seven or eight months in the year, beginning about the end of October, and continuing till the end of June. I have heard one sing for half an hour against a Wood-Lark, and I thought he would have dropt off his perch, by reason of his stoutness and freeness, rather than be out-done.

These

These birds are never seen in the winter, (except those kept in cages) in any part of the World, as far as I can learn from travellers I have conversed with, which occasions various opinions where they go at that time; and, as I believe no one can give a true account of them, I shall say nothing about it, but content myself with the knowledge I have.

This bird may be caught about the 25th of March, or the beginning of April, until the 10th or 12th, which generally proves a cock, and about that time the hens come, which make him very rank, so that without a great deal of care, you will lose a great many that are caught after that time. You may catch them divers ways, at several seasons of the year; that is to say, you may catch branchers in July, or the beginning of August, but I think April is the only time for the best birds. There are several ways used in catching these birds; one way, by making a hole in the ground, and setting a board or tile over it, sticking two or three meal-worms upon the stick that holds up the board or tile, and the bird coming with eagerness to catch the worm, falls down  
in

in the hole, and cannot easily get out again. Another way of catching them; is, by making your observations where they sing, and beating the leaves away as much as you can; then take a bit of a stick, put the meal-worm upon a pin, and stick the pin upon a lime-twigg; then lay it upon the top of a stick, and when he comes to his place as before, and spies the meal-worm, he greedily comes to take it from the lime-twigg, which holds him so fast that he cannot move. - But the best way of taking them, in my opinion, is in a little trap, called the Nightingale's trap. I myself have taken a dozen in one day in this trap; it is about the bigness of a round trencher; I have them made with a green silk net, a watch spring, and a wire as round as the trencher, with the net fastened to it; there is a little cork that comes through, and a little string which comes through likewise, and holds up the trap, in which stick a pin with a meal-worm upon it, and your cork very slight in it, and when the bird pulls the worm, the net falleth on the top of it: you must place your trap as near where the bird sings as you can; if it is in the middle of the hedge, or a place where

he

he used to feed, before you fix the trap, turn up the earth about twice the bigness of the trencher, for they look for their food where the ground is new turned up, and seeing the worm they presently come to it, but if they come not so soon as you would have them, you may turn up twice or three times more, for they will not forsake the place where they use to resort. You may commonly find them by the side of a chalk and sandy hill; likewise in a wood, coppice, or quick-set hedge. When you have taken a bird, tie his wings together with a bit of thread, for they are of a very wild nature when they are first catched, but soon become tame and familiar to their keeper. When you have tied their wings at the end as soon as taken, pluck or cut the feathers from their vent, otherwise it will be subject to clog and bake up, which is present death.

When you go to catch them, take some sheep's heart and egg with you, and in two or three hours after taken, you must cram them, by opening their bills with a quill or a stick made for that purpose. Let your meat be very moist, and take the bigness of a great pea.

pea, and they will presently swallow ;  
 and when you find they swallow it, you  
 may give them three or four, according  
 as they take it ; you must give them  
 about the same quantity once in an  
 hour and half, or two hours at farthest ;  
 when you get them home, put them in a  
 cage, a Nightingale back-cage, or if an  
 open cage, throw a cloth over one side  
 of it, and when you have crammed them  
 for a day and a half, put a small quan-  
 tity of meat in their pan, or a jelly glass,  
 and stick it full of ants, and sweep some  
 ants upon it (which you may fix be-  
 tween the lower perch and side of the  
 cage) so that they cannot easily get out,  
 which will soon learn them to feed, but  
 be sure you do not trust them to them-  
 selves too soon, and put ants mould at  
 the bottom of the cage ; let it be almost  
 an hour before you put the victuals to  
 him ; after you have crammed him, and  
 put him to the light, then he will the  
 sooner take to his food, so you may let  
 him alone for a quarter of an hour, or  
 near half an hour, and then if you find  
 he has eaten the ants out of his meat,  
 fill it up again ; take them clean out of  
 the mould, not to daub the victuals ;  
 your best way will be to take a little of  
 B the



the ants-mould, and lay it upon a sheet of white paper; when you stir the mould a little, the ants will run about the paper, then with your finger, or a little brush, move them off into his victuals.

As soon as you perceive him to feed, you need not cram him any more, but still continue to supply him with ants for one day longer, or more, if you see occasion.

You must still continue to keep his wings tied, and you'll find if he is a kindly bird, he'll sing in a week's time. I have heard them sing the next day after they fed themselves; when you find they begin to be familiar, then hang them where you please.

There are several opinions as to the choice of this bird, some are for a nestling, and others for a brancher, but I am for a bird that is caught in the beginning of April; I have brought up several nestlings which sing very stout, but they are apt to take any note they happen to hear; as likewise will a brancher; but a bird caught in April, will sing nothing but his own natural song, which, I am persuaded, is the finest harmony that any bird can make.

*Con-*



*Concerning their FOOD.*

I Have heard people talk of feeding them several ways, one way is with a paste that they make in Germany ; there is also another sort of food that is made up of paste and herbs, and a little flesh meat amongst it, which will keep for near a week : but I know a gentleman who had some of this paste, and gave an extraordinary price for the bird, which when he eat off, he soon after died.

My way of feeding is with sheep's heart and egg, thus : I take a heart, and give it them in the summer-time raw, chopped very fine, and likewise boil an egg very hard so that I can grate it with a grater which I have for that purpose ; I put one large egg to one heart, and chop it extraordinary fine, and having a little water to sprinkle it, I mix it together till it is as thick almost as a salve, but moist withal ; for if it be too dry, it makes them vent-bound, and if too large, they cannot digest it ; you must also take great care not to leave any string in the heart, for it is apt to get about the tongue ; I have

had them die within twenty-four hours, before I understood what was the matter; you may know it by their gaping, and making a motion as if they would vomit, at which time, if you perceive it, take hold of him, open his mouth, and draw it away with a needle, if possible; and when you have done, give him a meal-worm or a spider. I have saved more birds by giving them spiders than any thing again, but I do not give them above two in one day; this is the only food that I find to preserve them. If your number be but small, half an egg and half a sheep's heart, or if you have but one, the quantity accordingly. You may take a fowl's heart, with about as much egg as the heart, which will be enough for one bird a whole day. In the winter I par-boil the heart, and then order it as I do the raw, except, instead of water, I use some of the liquor the heart was boiled in, but be sure you do not let any of the fat go amongst it. I give them fresh victuals every day, for if it begins to be stale, they are apt to fling it up, for they do not love it after it begins to smell. I put them ants mould in the bottom of the cage, which I gene-

generally shift twice a week; this is all I feed them with, when they are well. They are birds that always dung loose, and if I find their dung a little looser, than ordinary, I take a little hempseed, bruised or ground extraordinary well, and take about the quantity as will lie upon a silver groat, and mix it well with a sheep's heart and egg; you may, if you please, give them now and then a fig, or a bit of fine loaf-sugar. It might be expected that I should describe how to know the cock from the hen, but that being difficult, I shall only say, that the best way is to know them by their vent, in April; or, as by all other birds, their largeness, or when you hear them sing.

*How to find the Nightingale's Nest, and take it.*

**S**HE builds commonly in a close quickset hedge, at the comb of the ditch, where there is great store of briars, and other materials, to keep her from her enemies.

She builds a nest of a different kind from any other bird; she has young ones about the middle of May fit to

take; I would not have you take them too young, but let them be very well feathered. I have had them taken too young, when they are very subject to the cramp and looseness, which makes their feathers all matted together; when this happened I could never raise them. You may let them lie in the nest till they can fly almost as well as the old one: if they be fullen, you may open their mouths, as I told you by the old one, and give them three or four bits at a time, and tie them close down in a basket for two or three days, and feed them once in two hours, then cage them up, and in two or three days they'll take their victuals off the stick. I have had them feed themselves in three days after they were taken out of the nest. Feed them with nothing but raw sheep's heart and egg, as directed before; while they are young put a little straw or dry moss in the bottom of the cage, but when they come to be larger, give them ants mould as you do the old one. I likewise advise you to learn them to feed upon live food, as ants, spiders, flies or meal worms; don't give them a great deal of live food, but in case of sickness it is necessary. I raised thirty-

thirty-one Nightingales in one summer, and lost not one before they moulted. Several fanciers of Nightingales came, and would not be persuaded but they were either branchers or old ones, because they were raised so clean. This makes me a little curious, because if the Nightingale is not kept clean, he seldom or never comes to any thing; as soon as they come to feed themselves well put them in a cage, and in two or three days put a little saucer of water, where they will dabble and wash themselves, and be as clean as any birds in the fields. When you have had them in single cages two or three days, you will hear the cocks record.

---

*The WOOD-LARK.*

THIS bird is a very fine melodious bird, having a delightful variety of notes, and is thought by a great many fanciers to exceed the Nightingale. I have had them sing against a Nightingale a whole hour, striving to out do him, so that I have been forced to



to take him from the place where he hung, for fear he should kill himself.

He sings nine months in the year; and is a very plentiful bird about the beginning of September or Michaelmas: he is to be taken with nets called clap-nets, such as are made use of to catch linnets, or other small birds, and those that are caught at this time of the year, are reckoned to be the best, because keeping them all the winter makes them more tame and familiar than a bird caught in January or February, and holds its song longer in the summer; a bird caught in January, is generally very stout, and will sing in three days after he is taken, and commonly sings stouter and louder than a Michaelmas bird, but not hold his song so long. A bird that is taken in February, at his layer, when he is matched with his hen, I have heard sing as soon as taken, all the way in bringing home; but by reason of his rankness will soon fall off his song, and you will have but little more from him all that summer.

There is likewise another way of taking Wood-Larks, that is in June or July, and are called branchers, which

is



is a young bird that has been hatched, and flew that year about two or three months old, these you may take with a net of about eleven, twelve, or thirteen yards long, and about three or four yards broad, with a line run through the middle of it. You must likewise have a Hawk called a Hobby, or a Casterel, or a Wind-Haver; there must be two at this sport, one to carry the Hawk, the other to hold the end of the line; and when you find a flock of Wood-larks, which lie commonly in pasture land or by gravel pits, get as near as you can; then show your Hawk, making him flutter his wings, which when the Larks perceive, they will lie very close to the ground; then one take hold at one end of the line and the other at the other end, till you both come to the place where they are, holding your Hawk up as you go. I have known them lie so close in fear of the Hawk, that they have been taken up by hand without the net being over them. Those are pretty birds, and will be presently tame, but, in my mind, is not so good as a Michaelmas bird, which you may take at that time very plenty with clap-nets, as you do other small birds,

birds, having one in a cage to call them; if you lay your nets in a cart-way, or turn up the ground, it will entice them to drop, especially when they hear your call-bird, which should be placed by the staff, next to the line. Pitch your nets upon as high ground as you can, for Wood-larks fly very high at that time of the year.

*How to take them in January.*

**T**HEY commonly lie near a wood-side in pasture-ground, where the sun rises. You must lay your clap-nets as you do at Michaelmas, and have a good call-bird and a brace-bird, which place betwixt your nets; when you perceive the bird lower, then shew your brace-bird, which when he sees he'll presently drop to it: those birds that are taken at this time of the year, are almost as good as any, and sing in three days time after they are caged off. Bruise them hemp-feed, or grind it very fine, and mix it with bread; put in about half as much hemp-feed as bread at the first, then put some red gravel in the bottom of the cage, and when you have mixed your bread and hemp-feed very well,

well, throw some of it upon the gravel, for they will sooner choose, when they are first taken, to feed in the bottom of the cage than in the trough; I commonly throw them some victuals for two or three days, and likewise some victuals in the trough; when you perceive them feed heartily out of the trough, then there is no occasion to put any at the bottom; this is my way of feeding them when they are first taken; and when he is come to his meat, I give him but a very little hemp-seed, and boil an egg very hard; either grate it with a grater or chop it very fine, but grating is the best, and mix it among the bread and hemp-seed and maw-seed; one egg will serve six Wood-larks very well two days. I feed them every other day, and if they have then any victuals left, I throw it away and give them fresh, because it is apt to be stale or dry, and will spoil the fresh meat. I give them likewise a little sheep's heart, mutton, veal, lamb, or any sort of flesh meat boiled or roasted, if it be not salt or too much done. This is the only food that I feed them with, when they are well. If I find them out of order, I give them some meal-worms or hog-lice, not exceeding  
above

above two or three in a day, because if you give them too many they will hanker after them, and neglect their common food, for too many are not wholesome. If I find them troubled with a looseness, I grate some chalk or cheese in the bottom of the cage, or amongst their victuals, and instead of gravel put mould full of ants at the bottom of the cage, which I take to be the best live food you can give them.

If he don't sing so free or stout as you would have him, put a little stick liquorice and a blade of saffron in his water, which will clear his voice and make him sing stouter.

*To know the Cock from the Hen.*

**S**OME say by the length of his heel, and also by the largeness of his wing, likewise by his setting up the crown upon his head; others say, that if he double his call two or three times, he is certainly a cock, but I find all those ways groundless; I therefore think mine the surest method, which is, by the length of the bird, the longest being generally a cock. However, when you have taken them, single them off in cages, and if they are  
good

good birds, they will sing in two or three weeks.

This is the best bird that is kept in a cage, except the Nightingale. He has such a curious, fine, melodious song, that he'll take from no other bird, unless those brought up from the nest, which may be taught with a pipe.

This is a hot-mettled bird, and breeds very soon in the year; I have known them fly by the 25th of March. If you have a mind to bring them up, you may feed them with Nightingale's victuals mixed with a little hemp-seed bruised, or a little sweet almond; let them be very well feathered before you take them, or you will find it very difficult to bring them up. When you take them tie them down in a basket, and give them four or five bits at a time once in two hours, according as their stomachs will bear it; they are very subject to the cramp, and very hard to moult, and be sure you give them plenty of Nightingale's food, for I find that is the best to make them moult. In my opinion, it is not worth while to bring them up from the nest, unless you design them for the pipe, their own song being so very soft and

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melo-



melodious. I have known some so tame that were taken at Michaelmas time, that they would eat victuals out of a man's fingers, and play with him as if they had been brought up from the nest.

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*A pleasant Story of a Wood-Lark and Nightingale.*

**M**YSELF and a gentleman going to catch Nightingales near Shooters-hill, hard by a coppice or wood-side, heard a Nightingale sing so sweetly, as, to my thinking, I never heard the like in all my life, (though I have heard many in my time) for the place being in a valley, and the coppice on the side of it, made all the notes of the Nightingale seem double by the eccho; we had not staid there long before a Wood-Lark perched upon the twig of an oak, and strove with his melodious notes to outvye the other; in a very little time comes another Wood-Lark, and placed himself about an hundred paces from the first; and under him was another Nightingale; these four birds sung with  
such



such sweetness, and warbled out their songs for near an hour in such delightful strains, that I think it impossible for any musical instrument to equal their ravishing harmony. As soon as the Wood-Larks were gone, the Nightingales, as we supposed, went to refresh themselves, having played their parts so well, that they must be near spent before they left their station.

My friend and I having stood a full hour to hear these songsters; before we left the place, I persuaded him to sing a merry catch under the shade of the wood, which he had no sooner begun, than one of the Nightingales came and bore his part: and in a minute's time came the other likewise, still keeping their former stations, my friend and I standing between them, for it is observed by all that know the nature of the Nightingale, that he will suffer no competitor if he is able to master him, and will sometimes rather die than give out; thus he sung three or four merry songs, the birds joining in chorus all the time, raising and falling their notes as he did, at which he was so highly delighted, that he protested he never enjoyed more pleasure in all his life; for the coppice

C 2.

being,

being on the side of a hill, and a valley in the bottom, occasioned such a sweet and pleasant eccho, that I am confident none could think the time long in attending to such delightful harmony.

*The SKY-LARK.*

**H**E is a very stout bird, very lavish in his song, and sings eight or nine months in the year; he is a very good bird, if he can be kept from hearing other birds, for if he does, he is a perfect mock-bird, and will take what he hears, whether good or bad, especially them that are brought up from the nest, which I take to be the best, provided you can get a good song-bird to bring them up. I have known them sold for five or six guineas a bird. They are very long lived and very hardy. I myself have bid twenty shillings for a bird that was twenty years of age. They have young ones about the middle, or latter end of April; and breed three or four times in a year, but I look upon a bird that is hatched in April or May,

to

to be the best. They commonly breed in fields of high grass, or in the marshes.

I have found them in a wheat-field, or in peas or oats, according to the season of the year. I have likewise taken them upon a Common or Heath.

*How to feed them.*

**L**ET them be, before you take them, about ten or twelve days old; if they are older they are apt to run out of their nest. I have seen them run out in ten days in dripping weather. When you have taken them, put a little hay in a basket and tie them close down, as I told you by the Wood-Larks, and take a little white bread and milk, and boil it very stiff, so that it be as thick as a pultice. I likewise take some rape-seed, and soak it three or four hours in water, and then boil it up, and either grind it or beat it in a mortar, or with a glass bottle upon a table; take about a third part of rape-seed to the white bread and milk, and feed them once in two hours; give about five or six bits to each bird, mixed every day with fresh victuals or it will grow sour and spoil them. I likewise give them now and then a little

flesh meat, sheep's heart, &c. You must put them in a cage as soon as you can, that is to say, keep them three or four days in a basket, or a week if they are young, then take a little hay, cut it very short, and put it in the bottom of the cage, or else a little coarse bran, but I prefer hay before it, because they are apt to drop their victuals in the bottom of the cage; and when they pick it up again, pick some of the bran, which does them no good. You must turn their hay up, or shift them once a day, for if you do not keep them clean, they seldom come to any thing. They require a large cage, I have never any smaller than a foot square. I keep them in hay till they can feed themselves with dry meat; which is, bread, egg, and hemp-seed, which they will do in about three weeks or a month. When you put them first in a cage, show them their victuals upon the point of a stick made for that purpose. This will make them learn to feed themselves, and likewise tame. I have brought them up so tame, that they would follow me about the house, and sit upon my hand, which indeed is a great rarity in a Sky-Lark. When they come to feed themselves upon

upon dry meat, you must boil your egg very hard, so that you may grate it with a grater, or chop it, as I told you, by the Wood-Larks, you must bruise your hemp-seed at first and put about half as much hemp-seed as egg; one egg and the quantity of a half-penny loaf, will serve half a dozen birds. When they are young, I serve them every day; and when about a month old, I put them some fine dry gravel at the bottom of the cage with a turf of three-leaved grass. I still stick them a little soft victuals at the side of the cage, for fear they should pine after it, for when they take to eat dry victuals, they'll leave off the other of themselves. This is all I feed them with, except a little flesh meat now and then, and bruised hemp-seed, 'till they have done moulting, then I feed them only with a turf of three-leaved grass once a week, and every other day bread, egg, and a little whole hemp-seed.

*How to know a Cock from a Hen.*

**S**OME will tell by his long claw; others by the two white feathers in the tail, and others by setting up his cople



copple crown, but none of these ways are certain. The largest and longest birds in the nest I always found to be cocks. There is no certain rule to know them by, but only the bigness and largeness. The best way is to take the largest bird and put it in a cage by itself, and then you'll hear him record his song by that time it is three weeks or a month old; the hens will make some small noise, but not any thing of a song. I have had the cocks at a month old, get into one corner of the cage, and repeat all their notes over like the old one, but not so loud, and those birds that do so, you may depend upon to be cocks.

*To take Branchers or Pushers.*

**A** Pusher is a bird that is taken three or four days after he has left the nest, if you let him lie till he's run out, then place yourself in a hedge, or in any convenient place where you may see the old one bring him meat, which when you perceive, run upon him as fast as you can, by which means you will find the young ones. As soon as you have got them, put hay at the bottom of the cage,

cage, and feed them with flesh meat, bread and milk, and rape-feed, as I told you before of the nestling. This bird, in my opinion, is as good as a nestling.

*The Brancher.*

**I**S taken in June or July with a hawk and a net, the same way as Wood-Larks.

A Brancher is a bird full grown, but has his nestling feathers: I look upon these birds to be very good, and come little short of a Nestling or Pusher; they are not so well to take when moulting, nor after they have moulted and their feathers set. In this case they will not moult well that year, nor, in all probability prove so good.

Chuse the longest and largest bird for the cock. When you have taken them give them bread, egg, and bruised hemp-feed; put at the bottom of the cage red sand, and strew them a little meat upon it for three or four days, and they will soon become tame and familiar.

*To take the Sky-Lark in flight.*

**T**HIS bird is caught in the same manner as other small birds are, with a clap-net. In the country, about Dunstable, and several other places, they are taken with a glass called a Larking-glass. These glasses are made near the bigness and shape of a cucumber, hollow within, and three, four, or five holes cut round and pieces of looking-glass placed in; it is fixed by a staff, and runs out like a whirligig, having a line which comes where we stand at a pullpin, we work it backwards and forwards. This must be when the sun shines, as the Larks will play the better, for the glass glittering, and the birds hovering about and seeing themselves in it, makes them come down to it; as soon as they come within reach, pull the nets over them. By this method, a great number of them may be caught at one time.

The Sky-Lark is likewise taken in dark nights, with a net called a tram-mel; it is about twenty-six or thirty yards long, and six over, run through  
with

with six ribs of packthread, which are placed at the ends, and put upon two poles sixteen feet long, made taper at each end, and is carried between two men half a yard from the ground, every six or seven steps touching the ground to cause the birds to fly up, otherwise you will carry the net over them without disturbing them. When you hear them fly against the net let it fall, and you may be sure they are safe under it. This net is of such a nature, that it catches all sorts of birds, such as Partridges, Quails, Woodcocks, &c. I have known twenty dozen of Larks caught in one night.

Another way of taking Larks is in a great snow; take one or two hundred yards of packthread, and at every six inches fasten a noose made with horse-hair (two hairs twisted together is sufficient) at every twenty yards you must have a little stick thrust into the ground, and so go on till it is all set; some have a thousand yards. Amongst the nooses scatter some white oats from one end to the other, and you will find the Larks flock very fast; and when three or four are caught take them out, otherwise they will make the rest shy,

thy, and when you are at one end they will be at the other feeding, so that you need not fear frightening them away, for it makes them more eager at their food; if it be after Christmas before the snow fall, those birds seldom or never prove good for singing.

This is a very fine, hardy, strong bird, and seldom sick, if you let him have a turf of three-leaved grass once or twice in a week.

If you find him out of order, that is, the dung loose, grate a little Cheshire, or other cheese, in his victuals, and give him some wood-lice, three or four in a day, which is very good; likewise put a little liquorice, and a blade of saffron in his water, which is very good, and will make him sing clear; if this will not do, give him now and then a spider. This is all that is needful for a Sky-Lark.



*The* TIT-LARK.

SOME of these birds are exceeding good song-birds, while others of them are worth very little. They are very proper birds to be kept with Skylarks, or young Canary birds; they take great deliberation in their song; some of them will chew, whisk, weet, and rattle to a great length; they will likewise run their feet and their snee jug, and twink two or three ways, and such a bird as this is of great value for raising other birds under; they are very handsome, long, taper birds, much about the size of a Nightingale; they do not sing above four or five months in the year, that is, March, April, May, and June, and some in July. These birds are very hardy, but I think them not worth while to bring up from the nest, by reason they are caught from the 25th of March, till the 10th or 12th of April. You catch them with nets, called clap-nets, as you do Linnets, or other small birds. If you  
D catch

catch them later they grow rank, and will not sing much in a cage that summer. As soon as you have caught them, tie their wings as you do a Nightingale's. You must have a cage closer than a common Wood-lark's cage. Put a little ant's mould with ants at the bottom of the cage; for his victuals, take a little of the best bread, grate it with a grater for that purpose, take about half the quantity of bread as hemp-feed bruised very fine, then mix it up with the bread, throw a little in at the top of the cage, and when your bird sees the ants, he'll come down and feed on it presently: in about an hour's time, you may look whether he has been eating bread and hemp-feed; if not, strew another handful of your ants and mold in the bottom, and a little more bread and hemp-feed on the top of it; if you find this will not do, take two or three meal-worms, cut them in half and put them in the bottom, amongst the bread and hemp-feed; set him in a light place, where he may not be disturbed; you may be sure this will make him feed. Keep him to his victuals two or three days, and then feed him as the Sky-lark or Wood-lark,

only

only bruise the hemp-feed, and he will sing in a week or ten days time. I have heard them sing the second or third day after they were caught. This bird may likewise be taken with lime-twigs, thus: carry a call-bird of the same sort, and when you have found a Tit-lark to your mind, place your call-bird six or seven yards from the tree where you hear him sing; if you find a mole-hill or ants-hill, dig it up, and put your call-bird just by; set three or four lime-twigs round your cage, place the great end of the lime-twigg upon the ground, and the other against the side of the cage; they will run very much about the call-bird in the cage, and a great chance but some of the twigs will lay hold of him. Place yourself in a hedge, as private as you can, and as soon as you find him fast, run, for I have lost many before I could get at them.

If you are obliged to set in high grass, take a stick about a yard long, put a nail into the stick, almost at the top, and hang your cage upon it, then lay two or three twigs on the top of your cage, the end of the twigs to come over it, and when they come to settle on the top of the cage, if you

lay your twigs well, they certainly will be taken. When you have taken them, tie the wings, and manage them in the same manner as those that are taken in the nets. These birds breed amongst the grass, peas, or beans, and those who are desirous to bring them up from the nest, must feed them in the same manner as you do a Wood-lark. It may be expected I should give some account how to know the cock from the hen, but it being a difficult thing, must refer you to find them out by their singing, which will soon be perceived in nestlings by their recording. This is all that is needful concerning the Tit-lark.

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*The* ROBIN-RED-BREAST.

**T**HE next to the Wood-lark for a song-bird; is the Robin-Red-Breast; he sings very sweetly, and some think him little inferior to a Nightingale. This bird is seen in the winter upon the tops of houses and old ruins, on that side commonly that the sun riseth and shineth in the morning; or  
under

under some covert where the cold and wind may not pinch him, for he is a tender bird. We commonly put them into a Nightingale's or Wood-lark's cage, only closer. They breed very early in the spring, and commonly three times in a year, in April, May, and June; they make their nest with a dry greenish moss, and quilt it with a little wool and hair, have generally five or six young ones at a time, seldom less than four. They build in old houses, barns, hay-ricks, or bank-sides towards the top, and when they are about ten days old you may take them from the old ones, and keep them in a little basket or box; if you let them tarry too long in the nest, they will be sullen, and consequently much more troublesome, and not fit to be brought up under another bird, or whistled to. You must feed them with sheep's heart and egg minced small, in all points as you feed Nightingales, and but a little at a time, and pretty often, by reason of its bad digestion; for if you give them too much at a time, they will be very apt to throw it up again, which is a sign they are not long-lived. You must be careful to keep them warm, and espe-



cially in the night; when you find them begin to be strong, you may cage them and let them have some moss at the bottom of the cage, put the meat in the pan or box, both of the sheep's heart and egg, and let them have something of the Wood-lark's mixed meat by them; for those I brought up with sheep's heart and egg, when they came to feed themselves, would rather eat the Wood larks meat than the sheep's heart and egg; you may give them which you will, according to your conveniency. A Robin will not touch a hairy caterpillar, but will gladly eat any smooth one, and there is no beter way to tame, and make wild birds sing, than to give them a pleasing insect or two. They are neither a slender nor thick billed bird, but gladly eat spiders.

A Robin is taken with lime-twigs, but with a trap-cage and meal-worm you may take a great many; and if you hear one bird excel another, take the bird you have most mind to and cage him, and he will sing in a short time, provided he be not an old bird. If you take a bird and do not hear him sing,

sing, by this mark you may know whether he is a cock or hen; if a cock, his breast will be a of brighter red than the hen, and his red will go farther upon the head.

*The Diseases Robin-Red-Breasts are subject to, and how to cure them.*

**I**N the first place, he is very subject to the cramp and giddiness, which makes him often fall off the perch upon his back, in which case it is present death, without something speedily used. The best remedy to prevent him from having the cramp, is to keep him warm and clean in his cage, that his feet be not clogged, for the dung being bound on so fast, makes his feet and nails rot off. If you find him droop, and seem sickish, give him three or four meal-worms or spiders, which will refresh him very much; but for the giddiness in the head, give him six or seven ear-wigs in a week, and he will never be troubled with it; Robins, above all others, except the Bullfinch, are very subject to it. If you find he has little appetite to eat, give him now and then six or seven hog-lice, which  
you

you may find in any piece of old rotten wood; be sure to give him fresh water two or three times a week; and to make him chearful and long winded, give him once a week in his water, a blade or two of saffron, and slice of stick liquorice which will help his song or whistling very much. This is a very fine bird, I have known them learn to whistle, speak, or pipe.

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*The WREN.*

**H**E is the smallest of birds, but has a very loud song, and fine withall; he commonly sits and sings upon the edge of a barn, or in a tree near cow-houses; he must have a large cage made with very close wire; he ought to have one side of the cage made like unto a squirrel house, and have it lined with coney-wool, dog-skin, or any thing that is warm. These birds breed about the beginning of May, they make their nests of green moss, in the shape of a high crowned hat, and line it with some small hair, wool,

wool, and moss at the outside; they make a round hole in the side to creep in. I have known fifteen or sixteen eggs in the nest, but, to my knowledge, I never took above seven or eight young ones out of the nest. If you have a mind to raise them, let them be very well feathered, and feed them with Nightingale's victuals, which is the properest and the best food, only give them theirs smaller, because they are a less bird. I have known them kept two or three years in a cage, and sing as if they were in the fields; if you find them out of order, give them an ear-wig, small spider, or flies.

*To know a Cock from a Hen.*

**I** WILL not be too curious about; I choose the bird with the largest eye, or if you keep them some time, the cocks will record. This is all that I shall say concerning the Wren, only feed them with Nightingale's food, and he'll answer your expectation, and sing most of the months in the year.

*The*

*The large TOM-TIT, by some called  
JOE-BENT.*

**T**HEY commonly frequent about farmers yards, cow-houses, or orchards; they are a hardy bird, and you may bring them up with any thing. I have fed them with bread and milk, or bread and cheese, and when grown up larger, with hemp-feed; they are a pleasing bird, and have a pretty sort of a song; and, in my opinion, the best victuals for them, is that given to Wood-larks; you may catch them with a lime-twig, as you do a Robin.

*The RED-START.*

**C**OMMONLY frequents the same places as the Wren, and is a very beautiful bird; the hen is almost the colour of a Nightingale; the cock has a black tail; he is very handsome and beautiful,



beautiful, has a fine melodious song, and doubles his notes very fine: he must be brought up, and fed with the same victuals as the Nightingale, and then he'll answer his keeping.

*The* BLACK-BIRD.

**T**HIS is a very fine bird, and for the building and breeding any country boy knows how it is; they breed very soon in the year: at the latter end of March I have had young ones; you may take them at ten or twelve days old; in the country they commonly feed them with cheese-curd, or white bread and milk: my way of feeding them, is with sheep's or ox's heart, or any other sort of lean meat, cut very small, and mixed up with a little bread; while they are young you must make their victuals moist, and feed them once in two hours; you must be sure to keep them very clean, and take their dung away every time you feed them; if you find their nest grows dirty, take them out and put them in clean straw; this

this bird is like all others, if he be kept nasty, he seldom answers the end; you must part them as soon as you can: when they are grown up, you may feed them with any thing of flesh meat boiled, raw or roasted; you may likewise bring them up to Wood-lark's victuals, but I think flesh-meat, mixed with a little bread, is best. This bird is a stout, strong bird, and has a very pleasing note of his own; you may learn them either to whistle, or play a tune to a pipe, which I have heard some do very fine; he'll whistle about four or five months in the year, and is very delightful to his keeper, if well learned; he is a very hardy bird, but if you find him out of order, give him a large spider or some wood-lice; you may likewise put a little cochineal in his water, which is very chearful and good; you may give him two or three spiders in a day, and likewise five or six hog-lice; but if you give him too many in one day, it will take him off other food, and do him more harm than good.

*How to know a Cock from a Hen.*

**S**OME say, the uppermost bird in the nest is a cock, others say, the nestling is a cock; some chuse them by their wings, others by their heads, or full eye, but I find all this groundless; my opinion is, to take the blackest bird in the nest, which, when you see them altogether, you may easily discover, for the cock will be considerably blacker than the hen.

There are two sorts of Black-birds, a black and a grey sort, the hen of the black sort is commonly as black as the cock of the grey sort; however the cocks of both are blacker than the hen, but the blackest sort I take to be the best, and whistle the longest.

E

The

*The THRUSH, in some Countries called  
the THROSTLE.*

OF these birds there are three or four sorts: the first is a red wing, the next is what is generally called a Song-Thrush, and builds in woods or orchards; another is the small blacker sort, and builds upon the heaths or commons; the next is called the Mease-taw Thrush, very large and handsome, better for the spit than for a song. A Wood-song Thrush is a very fine bird, and sings nine or ten months in the year; he builds his nest with moss on the outside, and commonly clay or cow-dung in the inside. The Heath-Thrush is much of the same nature, only he builds his nest in the furzes. This birds breeds very soon in the year; I have had young ones in March; they are fed with the same food as a black-bird; he is subject to the cramp, especially if kept dirty. I have had those that could not stand for a fortnight, yet with great care I have brought

brought them to be fine birds. When I find them cramped, I put fern in the bottom of their cage; and feed them as they lie, and turn up the fern as often as they are fed; if you cannot get fern, put clean straw at the bottom, and by keeping them clean, they will soon come to their legs; if you find them cramped, feed them with better victuals, as Nightingale's sheep's heart and egg chopped very small. I cannot give an account how to know a cock from a hen, only as soon as they begin to feed themselves, they begin to record, both cocks and hens; the cock will get upon his perch, and sing his notes low for some time, the hens will do it only by jerks, and make us believe they will sing, but to no purpose. If you are not satisfied which are the cocks, keep them till after moulting, which is about Bartholomew-tide, for as soon as they have done moulting, the cocks will break out strong in song. I have had them sing out like an old bird, a fortnight or three weeks before Michaelmas; they will sing in winter as well as summer. They have very pleasing notes and a good song. I have known them learn the Nightingale's or



Wood-lark's song, and divers others. Of these several sorts of Thrushes, in my opinion the Heath-Thrush is the best, and comes nearest to the song of a Nightingale; and if they are sick, use them in the same manner as I told you by the Black-bird.

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*The STERLING.*

**H**E has but a very ordinary song of his own, but may be taught to whistle, pipe, or talk. I have heard them talk as well as a Parrot, and pipe to several tunes. This bird builds in trees or pidgeon-houses, or in the sides of dwelling houses; some say a Tree Sterling is best, and others a House Sterling; others prefer those that build in a pidgeon-house. But in my opinion they are equally good, provided they are brought up young. If you would have very good ones, take them about double pen-feathered, that is, about ten days old, put them in a basket in some clean straw, and keep them clean and warm;

warm; talk to them what you would have them learn, every time you feed them. I have had them begin to talk as soon as they fed themselves, or rather before. You must feed them with ox's heart, or sheep's heart, as I told you by the Black-bird. They must be fed once in two hours, and give them five or six pieces at a time, as big as a horse bean, and when they come to feed themselves, you may bring them up to Wood-lark's meat, and give them a little flesh-meat twice or three times a week.

Some are of opinion that they will learn best in a dark cage, but I have known them taught in an open one; some will tell you, that you must cut their tongue, but there is nothing at all in it, for I have heard more talk that have not been cut, than those that have.

This is a very pleasing bird, and hardy withal, yet I have had some of them so troubled with fits, that they have fell down and beat themselves about the cages, and if I had not taken them out, they would certainly have killed themselves. The best thing to

prevent this, is to give them now and then a spider or meal-worm, and to put a little saffron in their water.

*To know a Cock from a Hen.*

**O** PEN his mouth and look under his tongue, and you will find a black stroak which you may perceive quite through, if it be a cock, but the hen has little or none; when they come to moult, the cock loses that black stroak; the feathers when moulted off the breast of the cock is very beautiful, and hath several fine colours which the hen hath not.

This bird, if well taught, is of great value. I have known them sold for five or six guineas a piece.

*The SPARROW.*

**T** HIS bird is as plentiful, as it is universally known. He may be brought up very tame and familiar. I have heard them sing part of the Canary-bird and Linnet's note; you may rear

rear them with any thing, bread and water, bread and milk, or flesh meat; when you have brought them up, feed them with hemp and canary seed. If you find them out of order, give them whole oatmeal among it. This is all that you need feed them with, then they will dung hard and fine as a Linnet, or any other seed-bird; they are very hardy birds, and easy to be brought up. If you would have them learn under any other bird, take them out of the nest at double pen-feather. I have known a sparrow whistle good part of a tune sitting upon a man's finger, being of such a tame nature.

*To know a Cock from a Hen.*

**W**HEN you take them, look under the throat, down to the breast, and you will perceive some to be blacker than others, those that are blackest are the cocks. When they have moulted off, you will easily discover the cock from the hen by the blackness on the breast.

*The LINNET.*

**T**HIS bird is a very fine one, and apt to learn either to pipe or whistle any other bird's note. I have heard of their learning to speak.

These birds build upon heaths or commons, or in pasture ground; they also build among furzes. I have known a nest taken in broom, or in white thorn, in a hedge; they commonly breed in April, and have young ones fit to take about the latter end; they have commonly four or five young ones, and likewise three or four nests in the year; you may take them about eight, nine or ten days old, if you would have them learn. They are a very fine bird for learning the song of a Wood-lark. I have heard them sing so fine, that I could not tell which was the Wood-lark, or Linnet; they likewise take the Canary-bird, or any other bird's song.

There is your sweet song Linnet,  
which I have known sold for three or  
four



four guineas a bird; the first original was taken from the Sky-lark and Tit-lark, and several other birds.

*How to feed them.*

**T**HEY are fed with several sorts of food; my way of feeding them is with a little white bread soaked in water, and when you have done, strain it out of the water, and boil it up with a little milk, to make it very stiff like a hasty pudding. If you have a small quantity of birds, you may make but little, because it sours in two days time, and sooner if you put seed in. I generally put seed in, as much as will serve about half a day; take a little rape-feed and soak it in water about ten or twelve hours, then scald it or boil it up; then strain your water from it, and take a little and squeeze it with a knife upon a trencher, or with a glass bottle upon the table, then take a little and mix it among the bread and milk; feed them once in two hours, from six in the morning till eight o'clock at night. When they come to feed themselves, give them a little of the scalded rape-feed; after they have fed themselves

selves about a week, you may give them a little of the Wood-lark's victuals, by reason too much soft victuals will make them rotten; the sooner you can break them of bread and milk the better; nevertheless, you may give them some Wood-lark's meat, or some other soft victuals, till they are able to crack their seed, which I look upon to be at six or seven weeks old, before which time they are not able to live upon hard seed.

*To know a Cock from a Hen.*

**W**HEN you have the nest together, you may observe them that are the brownest upon the backs, and likewise if you open their wings, you will find the second, third, or fourth feather white up to the quill; those birds that are so brown on the back, and shew quite white up to their quill, never fail of being cocks. The hens have a little cast of white, and a little brownish upon their backs, but not so much as a cock, for which reason if you see the nest together, and observe them well, you will see the difference better than I can describe

describe to you, that is, by the white feathers in the wing, and the brownness of the back.

*How to catch Branchers.*

**Y**OU may go to their breeding places, or somewhere near them, where you can find a piece of turnip-feed, or a bank of wild rape-feed, or a place where the old one brings them to water; there you may lay your clap-nets, and catch both old and young, but young especially, which are best, if you have good song-birds to bring them up.

When you have got them, put them in a store cage fit for that purpose, and get some of the seed which you find them to feed upon, and likewise put into the cage a little hemp-feed ground or bruised; set them in a window or place convenient, where they are not disturbed, feeding them with this victuals for three or four days, then cage them up, either in back cages, or any other, which you have most convenient; feed them with rape, and a small quantity of canary-seed amongst it, with some few corns of hemp. This is all to feed the Nestling,

ling, Brancher, or Linnet, if well ; if not, you may give them a little lettice-feed, or beet-leaf ; you may likewise put them a small matter of liquorice or saffron in the water. You may give them a small matter of seeded chickweed now and then ; if you find them troubled with a looseness give them a little chalk, and a little bruised hemp-feed, with now and then a stalk of plantane-feed. I could mention several other things concerning a Linnet, but this is the best and readiest way that I am acquainted with. I have taken observations of it these thirty-four years.

*How to stop a Linnet, or any other Bird, and make them sing after they have moulted off.*

**T**HE stopping of a bird is of great use to the bird-catchers, and likewise such as would have them a sweet song, you must let your bird, before you stop him, be a year old or better, and keep him in a back cage, so that he may be able to find his victuals in the dark ; you may put him in a stop about the middle of May. The nature of a  
stop

stop is, to have a case made fit for the purpose, then put in your birds and leave the door open till you are satisfied they have found their meat and water, then darken them by degrees 'till they are quite dark, and when you see they have found their meat and water there cover them with a blanket or any thick cloth that is warm, keeping them very hot; you may look at them, once in two or three days, give them fresh water, and blow their seeds: It is best not to clean their cages above once a month, by reason the hotness of their dung forces them to moult. You should take a bit of stick or knife, to keep their dung down, to prevent dirtying their feathers, and then let them continue in this close stop for three months, by which time they will be moulted off, then open them a little and a little by degrees; take off the blanket first, and let them stand so three or four days, then open the door a little way, take them out and clean their cages, after that put them in again with the door half open for two or three days longer, then take them out and put them in a warm place, so that they come to the air by degrees; put them

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a little beet-leaf and liquorice in the water, this with a blade of saffron, which is a very good thing, when he is drawn off a stop. After you have drawn them out of a stop, you will find them to sing still more and more, so that they will be for the bird-catcher's use, or to learn any other birds their song; those birds will continue in song 'till about Christmas, or after, by which time most young birds are come to their song.

The Bird-branchers are very plentiful to be caught in June, July, or August, and likewise flight-birds about Michaelmas in great quantities: I have known forty or fifty dozen caught in one day with clap-nets.

### *The GOLDFINCH.*

**H**E commonly builds in orchards or hedges, makes a very pretty nest, and lines it with very fine down or wool: he breeds in April, and has three or four nests in a summer; if brought up from their nest they'll take their song  
from

from a Wood-lark or Canary-bird, or from any other bird; they are likewise a very fine bird to draw their water, and open their box for their victuals, if you bring them up from their nest. You may feed them with white bread and milk, according to the nature of a Linnet, only grind a little canary-feed, and put the flour of it in the room of rape-seeds, feeding them a little once in an hour or two, three or four bits at a time, for their stomachs will not bear a great deal, they being very tender birds; you may likewise put some Naples biscuits among it, keeping them with this sort of victuals till they are five or six weeks old, then give them a little canary-feed, and a little soft meat besides, but bring them to canary-feed alone as soon as you can, which is the best food for this bird. Some feed them with hemp-feed, but it is apt to make them rotten, and decays their colour very much. This bird is very merry, and has a pleasant song of his own, and were they not so plentiful, they would be more esteemed than a canary-bird; they have been sent abroad to the Canaries, and other countries, where they

are more admired than Canary-birds are in England.

This bird is caught several ways, and at different seasons of the year, they being so familiar, that in a fortnight after they are taken they'll sing with you. Young ones (which are called Grey-pates) are caught in June, July, and August, but the best time for catching them is about Michaelmas. They are most commonly taken with clap-nets as you do Linnets, in thistley fields, where they are generally found in flocks, for the seed of thistles is what they feed upon most part of the winter. They are tender in the summer, but hardy if caught in the winter, and will sing presently. They are fond of hemp-feed, and are generally fed with it at first, but should be broke from it as soon as possible. They will sing very stout with hemp-feed but seldom live very long or moult well; if you bring them up to canary-feed, they are more likely to answer your expectation.

*To cure them when sick.*

**G**IVE them a little groundsel every day, and a blade of saffron in their water; if they are loose, give them a little chalk, stick it in the side of the cage, or crumble it at the bottom; likewise give them always red sand or gravel at the bottom of the cage, for the seeds being oily, this qualifies and takes the oil off their stomachs. You may likewise give them a little lettuce-feed, or thistle-seed, which you may find in the great thistle.

*To know a Cock from a Hen.*

**Y**OU may know them either old or young by the blackness of the wings, the edges of the cock's being black up to the shoulder, and of a fine gloss; they are also black over the bill, and under it red; the yellow and red, and all their colours are brighter than the hen's, she has a little on the wing, but its grey to a cock's; they are also grey over the bill, where the other is black. You may stop these birds as you do Linnets.

*The BULLFINCH.*

**T**HIS is a very fine bird both for beauty and learning songs, but his natural one is very indifferent. He may be learned to pipe almost any tune at command, you may also learn him to talk. Some are taught to speak and whistle at command; and when they have once got a tune, they seldom forget it, not even if they hang amongst other birds. They are very valuable, if well brought up, and are sometimes sold for nine or ten guineas a bird.

*To find their nests.*

**T**HESE birds have no young ones till the latter end of May, or beginning of June; they commonly build in an orchard or wood; they make but an indifferent nest, and have young ones two or three times in a summer, and four or five each time. They are not very plenty in England, for the garden-  
ers



ers destroy all they can, they being very mischievous in destroying wall-fruit. In some parts of this kingdom the church-wardens give two pence for every Bullfinch that is killed to those that chuse to demand it, which perhaps is one reason of their scarcity. In some countries they are called Noops, Thick-bills, and Hoops, from their own notes, because naturally they have a hooping sort of a note. In London we call them Bullfinches, by reason they have a thick, black head, and a stubbed short bill; the cock has a very red breast.

*How to feed them.*

**Y**OU may feed them and bring them up the same way as you do a Linnet, only when they feed themselves, give them more canary-feed than a Linnet. Generally give them the better half canary-feed, and the rest rape; and if you find them out of order, give them a little fine hemp-feed, and a little saffron in the water; give them likewise a little Wood-lark's victuals, the same as you do a Linnet. Take them when about twelve or fourteen days old; when kept four or five days,  
or

or a week, you may begin to pipe whistle, or talk to them what you have a mind they should learn; they are birds that soon learn. A gentleman that piped to one from a fortnight old to two months, and then being obliged to leave his bird and go into the country for six months, before he returned his bird whistled near three parts of the tune, notwithstanding he had no-body to pipe or tune to him in his absence.

*To know the Cock from the Hen.*

**T**HERE are several opinions, some say by the whiteness of their rump, or others by the blueness of their back, and others by a cast of reddish feathers under the wing. The best way that I could find, was to pull about half a dozen off their breast when they are about three weeks old; then in about ten or twelve days after, you will perceive the feathers to come where you have pulled, as red as blood, if a cock; if a hen, they will come of a pale brown; though I have known both to whistle and speak, yet a cock is far more beautiful, and better for learning.

ing. This bird, in my opinion, is the best for learning of any we have in England.

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*The CHAFFINCH.*

**H**E is a very stout bird, and very lavish in his song, but has various notes. The Essex are the best; there has been known some brought out of that county, and sold for a guinea and a half, or two guineas a-piece; they commonly learn them a song, which is called Whitford Tune, and Chopping Lim. They are often brought up under other birds, called Sweet Song Chaffinch. The wild ones do not sing above three months in the year, but those that are brought up nestlings, or branchers, will sing six or seven months in the year.

They breed almost in every hedge, and have young ones at the beginning of May; they breed twice or three times in the year, you may take them about ten or twelve days old, and feed them

them as you do a Linnet. They are a very hardy bird, and if you would have them branchers you may take them in June or July; you may take them at a watering place, or in a broad lane, with clap-nets, as you do Linnets.

*How to know a Cock from Hen.*

**I**F you have a nest, take the bird that is the highest colour, and the brightest white in the wing, likewise the brownest in the back; if you are curious to know the cock, as soon as themselves, pull five or six feathers off their breasts, and if they be cocks, in ten or twelve days time they come out red, if hens, they will come much the same colour as they were before; likewise, if you have branchers, and do not know the cocks from the hens, you may do the same, for all cocks are of a purple red on the breast, and the hens grey.

*The GREEN-BIRD.*

**W**HICH in several counties is called the Greenfinch or Green-Linnet, is a very strong hardy bird, and fitter for the spit than for singing; he is a very fine bird to ring the bells in the cage; if you bring him up from the nest he will learn either to whistle or pipe, or sing any birds song; you may feed him with the same victuals as you do a Linnet or Chaffinch, and if sick, the same victuals that cures a Linnet will cure him. You may catch them with clappets, as you do Linnets, about Michaelmas, in the common fields.

*The AVERDEVINE.*

**T**HIS is a very pretty merry bird, and is much the colour and bigness of a grey Canary-bird; they do not breed in these parts, nor can I give you any account where they breed, but I believe they come from the north, being commonly caught here in the winter; they



they frequent here the alder trees by the river-side, and are to be caught as Linnets or Goldfinches; they feed upon the same seed as the Chaffinches or Linnets, but they love the white seed; the cock has a black spot upon his head, and a little black under his throat.

*The TWITE.*

**T**HIS is a very merry bird, and fit to keep among Linnets or Goldfinches, or any other small birds; they are continually singing, and provoke others to sing; you may feed and catch them as you do Chaffinches and Linnets.

The cock has a red spot just upon his rump, and the hen hath none.

*The RED-POLE.*

**T**HIS is a pretty little bird, the cock hath a very red breast, and a red head, he sings a pretty sort of chattering song, but, in my opinion, hardly

hardly worth keeping. They are fed with the same food as a Chaffinch or a Linnet. These three last birds come from the north against winter, and return back in the spring; some say, they breed in France, and call them the French Linnet, but I believe they breed in Scotland, or those north parts, by reason of their coming here against cold weather.

Having now given an account at large of the nature, songs, and manner of catching, feeding, and breeding of English birds, I shall proceed to give you a brief account how to order foreign ones, according to the best of my knowledge and experience, which has been for near fifty years.

### *The CANARY-BIRD.*

**T**HESE birds we formerly had brought from the Canaries, and no where else, and are generally known by that name; but we have abundance of that kind come from Germany, so we call them by the name of the country,

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try, German birds, but I believe their first original were brought from the Canary Islands. Those brought from the Canaries are not so much in esteem with us as formerly, for those brought from Germany and France far exceed them in handsomeness and song. German birds having many fine jerks and notes of the Nightingale and Tit-lark.

The nature of the Canary-bird is quite contrary to all others, for as other birds are subject to be fat, they never are, (I mean the cocks when in song) for the great mettle of the bird, and his lavish singing, will hardly suffer him to keep flesh upon his back.

*How to chuse a Canary-Bird, and to know whether he hath a good song, likewise whether a Cock or a Hen.*

AS to the colour I shall say least, that depending entirely on the fancy of those who buy them; I shall only mention some of the terms used by Canary-bird Fanciers, viz. French, so called from the breed of some that a few years ago were brought from France, but since much improved in the colour by our breeders at home; the finest sort  
are

are of a beautiful bright yellow, bespangled with an intermixture of jet black spots, having little or no white about them. The next is the mealy bird, so called, from the mealy kind of colour which seems to cover all his feathers, so that he has no other colours perfect, being covered with that mealy cast, though often in breeding, they throw as fine a feather to their young ones as the best.

The next are your mottled ones, being mostly white, mottled here and there with black or brownish spots; some all white, some all yellow, some the colour of buff, some of an ash colour, and some grey; these last are the most contemptible for their colour, but yet are generally as good in nature as any; but, as I said before, the choice of colours only depends on the person who is to be the buyer.

*To chuse a Bird in health.*

**I**N the first place, let him be a young sprightly bird, and strait, standing with vigour, like a Sparrow-Hawk, not subject to be fearful, but after flinging himself two or three times from the perch

to the top of the cage, he will shake himself, and undauntedly strut, as if void of all fear, and appear vigorous, sleek and strait; but to observe this well, set the bird at a convenient distance from you, that this may not wholly be the effects of fear; for a bird that is a little sick will do what is above-mentioned, and appear sleek and trim during the time of his surprize, and while you stand too near his cage, by the craft of the person who would sell a sick bird; by this means you may be deceived; for by their flurting at the cage with their hand, as if pointing at the bird to show the beauty of him, he will stand strait, draw up his feathers sleek, and appear as I have before-mentioned, and so deceive the buyer; but by hanging him up, or setting him at some distance from you, if he is not well, he will presently shew it, by crouching down, hanging his wings, appearing all of a heap, and very rough in his feathers, and putting his head under his wings; all these are bad signs, and denote the bird unhealthy. There is another way to know if a bird be in health, and that is by his dung; when he is taken out of the store-cage, ob-  
serve



serve well if the bottom of the cage he is in be clean, then take notice of the dung, and the manner of his dunging, for if he bolts his tail afterwards, like the Nightingale it is a sign he is not in perfect health, although he may sing for the present; but if he does not, and his dung appears thick, hard, round, and being of a fine white on the outside, and darkish in the middle, and quickly dry, then it is a very good sign, for a seed-bird seldom dungs too hard, unless he be very young.

The bad symptoms of this bird's dunging, are, first, his bolting his tail like the Nightingale; the next is, if he dung thin like water, with no thickening in it, that is a bad sign; and lastly, if he dung only a slimy whiteness, with no black in it, it is a very dangerous sign that death is approaching, and that he will not continue long with you.

*To chuse a Bird for song.*

**I**F you hear him sing before you buy him, then you are sure you have not bought a hen for a cock. As to the song, I count it good, when it is begun something like the Sky-lark, then run-  
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ning

ning on the notes of the Nightingale, which if he begins well, and holds it long, nothing in my mind can be sweeter; but as the fancies of men are as different as either the colours or songs of the bird, so their eyes and ears are the best judges for their fancies, yet I shall not fail to give my opinion and judgment to those who have not had experience in this delightful and innocent amusement.

The next observation is, a bird that begins with the sweet of the Nightingale, and ends with the song of the Tit-Lark, is both harmonious, sprightly, and very delightful to the ear.

These notes are distinguished by the Sweet Jugg, followed by a swelling slur, with the water-bubble, and then the sprightly song of the Tit-lark, chewing and whisking several times in a breath; a bird that will go sweetly through his song in this manner, without breaking off, may be said to be a good song bird.

Some fanciers are pleased when a Canary-bird only sings the song of the Tit-lark, which is indeed very pleasant and delightful. Others only fancy that bird which begins like the Sky-lark, and holds his song all the while in the same

same manner, having long notes and sweet, but I think not much variety in it.

If these instructions may not at first truly qualify a person, let this serve in general, that they chuse what is most agreeable to their own ear, and that which holds the song the longest, without breaking off short, with harsh scraping notes, or disagreeable whining.

*To know a Cock from a Hen.*

**T**HE first and most certain method, is the bird's song, which is a never-failing argument. If they hear him sing, he is a cock, for the hens never sing, although some have, by a sort of jabbering noise, which some make better than others, deceived not only unskilled persons, but those who have thought themselves complete fanciers.

The way then to distinguish between the cock's song, and the hen's jabbering is, that the cock, let him sing ever so indifferent, almost every time he strikes a note, you may easily perceive the passage of his throat to heave with a pulsive motion, swelling like a little pair of bellows all the time he is warbling

ling out his pretty notes, which never happens to a hen; for let her make what noise she will, and resemble singing ever so well, this motion is never observed in her throat as it is in the cock's.

The next observation is, the largeness, vigour, and majestic carriage of the cock, which he generally shews if in health, by stretching his neck and head to the utmost extent. The hen is not only smaller and shorter every way, especially from the legs to the vent, which seems to come down from the legs, under the belly to the vent, shorter, and as it were, of a more sudden roundness, occasioned by nature being larger in that part, for containing and laying their eggs; whereas, the cock appears in that part more slim and longer, coming down from his legs to his vent, gradually taper, ending in a small point under his tail.

Another thing to be observed is, if you blow the feathers of both, you will find the vent of the cock to appear longer than that of the hen, and the orifice not quite so wide.

The next and last observation is from the colour above the bill of the cock, which

which is a more bright yellow, as likewise under his throat, and on the pinion of the wing; for let the birds be of what colour they will, they always have a little yellow almost upon their bills, and under their throats, and a stroke over the eyes, which in the cocks is a bright strong yellow, but in the hens it is more languid and pale.

*Remarkable Deception in these Birds.*

**F**OR want of a due observation of the above-mentioned rules, a person who supposed himself a complete judge, put two hens together to breed, supposing one of them to be a cock, and would not be convinced by all the arguments which were used to the contrary, by those who well knew the difference by these observations, till at last his supposed cock had laid more eggs than her sister hen, which made him acknowledge his obstinacy, and own himself a subject for laughter.



*Concerning the Canary-Birds when they begin to build, or those you intend for breeding.*

THESE birds breed four or five times in a year, and commonly lay four, five or six eggs at a time; the most young ones I ever knew brought up at a time in one nest was six; they set fourteen days, including the day you set them. Your birds must be both yellow matched together, and stout, otherwise they will breed very small, but if your cock or hen be yellow and small, then match it with a large mealy one, which will strengthen the breed. I would advise you not to match your birds till the middle of March, and turn them up the latter end, which is time enough, let your places be fitted up in this manner: in the first place, you must have a convenient cage, or else prepare a room which will be convenient for that purpose. If it be convenient, let it be towards the sun-rising, because the birds love warmth, and the sun-shine in the room in the morning makes the room warm all the day.

You

You may make an out let in the window towards the sun-rising, where they may go out and have a little air when they please. I would not advise you to overstock the room; but if it is pretty large, you may turn in ten or twelve pair. You must prepare your room after this manner, throw red sand or gravel at the bottom, and if you please, you may set up a tree in the middle of the room; you may likewise nail up nest-boxes and back-cages in every corner of the room, for some of the birds love to breed in the dark, and others in the light; you must be sure to put as many more boxes and cages as you have pairs, for they love to have choice, and yet they are apt to go to nest again before the first fly. If there is not conveniency, they are apt to make their nest upon the young ones. I have lost a nest of two or three young ones upon that very account; when I went to look for birds, I saw none but the nest made in the same box, which made me wonder what was become of my birds, and pulling out the nest, I found them all smothered under it; they will likewise build in the tree which is in your room, and if you do not tie it in several places,

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places, the nest, eggs, and young ones will be apt to fall through. I have lost many birds after this manner. But, in my opinion, the best way to breed them for pleasure is in a cage made for that purpose, which ought to be as large again as what we call breeding cages, so that they may have room to fly, for the more room the better. You must likewise have two boxes to make their nests in, for they are apt to go to nest again, before the young ones fly, and being two boxes, the hen will build in the other box, and the cock will feed the young ones.

If you chuse to bring them up by hand, feed them with the same food as you do Linnets, and take them away at twelve or fourteen days old; for if you let them lie longer with the old ones, they grow fullen, and will not feed; but if you design to let the old ones bring them up; let them alone till the old ones hatch again; as soon as they have young ones, I would have you take the former away, or else they will spoil the young ones by pulling them out of their nest, or picking them as they lie. When you take them away, you must make their victuals very good,  
boil



Boil an egg hard, then take a little of the yolk, likewise about as much of the best bread, and also a little scalded rape-seed, about a third part of the rape-seed as there is bread. When it is boiled soft, you may grind it in a mill; if you have but few birds, you may take a trencher and bruise it with a blade of a knife, and make it very fine, for the finer the better; you must likewise put a little maw-feed among it, and so mix it up altogether, and give them a pan full of it every day. You may likewise give them a little scalded rape-seed, and a little rape and canary-seed by itself. This is the food that I feed young Canary-birds with, that are brought up by the old ones; I commonly feed them with this food till they have moulted off; take particular care not to let the rape-seed be sour, for if it be, it gives them the looseness and kills them. You must likewise make your soft victuals fresh every day, or every other day at farthest.

The next thing is, how to feed and pair them for breeding. I always put the cock and hen together in a small cage, so that they may be paired. I turn them into the room or cage

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where

where I design for their breeding. I feed them very well with soft meat, that is, egg, bread, maw-feed, and a little scalded rape-feed, hardly a third part of egg, and so mix it very well together, I hardly put one part of rape-feed to the quantity of bread and egg; before they have young ones, give them groundsel with seed on it, and afterwards chickweed with seed upon it; towards June give them some shepherds pufs, and in July and August plantain; for want of these things you may supply them with a cabbage lettuce; but this is not to be used for a constancy, and be sure you do not fail of giving them fresh greens and soft victuals every day when they have young ones (especially in the morning) for if they are neglected when young, it will be a hard matter to raise them.

*How to order them to build their Nest.*

**T**O make their nest, give them Elk's hair and a little fine hay; some give them soft feathers; for my part, I give them nothing but a little fine hay, and Elk's hair, for they will use the dry chick-

chick-weed, or any thing they find at the bottom of the cage, which if they do, and afterwards line it with hair, it will do as well as the best.

*Of the several Distempers incident to Canary-Birds, and how to cure them.*

**T**HEY are subject to several distempers, though some are of so good, and happy a constitution, that they may be said to pass away their lives without any diseases, twenty-four years.

The first malady which they are most incident to, is a surfeit, either from their being fed by the old ones, with too much greens, or from their own overgorging when they come to feed themselves on the same food; especially that sort of chick weed, which is very thick of leaves, and is very rank and moist, having too many broad leaves and no seeds; this sort of chick-weed is very pernicious both to old and young, but more especially to the young ones, which causes them to swell very much under their bellies, appearing as it were transparent, full of little red veins, all their little bowels sinking down to the extream parts of their bodies, sometimes

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turning black; when it comes to this, it is then very dangerous; besides other remedies, they must be kept very warm: the same distemper comes also by violent colds, but is more easy to cure if taken in time, and is called a swelling, in the first degree only white, which if not prevented turns to a red, and as in the surfeit, so in this; it last of all turns to a black swelling, which is very hard to cure; there are few which survive the last degree of this distemper. Therefore it is best, at first, to prevent its progress before it gets too far. Moulting is natural to all birds, and yet while it lasts it may be counted dangerous, unless proper care be taken; for indeed we may compare the first moulting to that of childrens breeding their teeth, and equally as hazardous and mortal to the birds, as to the children, but some seasons are more favourable than others, that is, when moulting time comes in very warm, and concludes with temperate weather, there is less danger. You may discover when they begin and are in moult, by these symptoms; they will appear rough, melancholy, and often sleeping in the day, with their heads under their wings; you will find the cage they

they are in all covered with down and small feathers, for the young ones only the first year cast their down and small feathers, and the second, their tail and wing feathers; they sometimes grow very sick by means of a little pimple growing on their rumps, called the pip on the tail.

The best way is to let it have its course, and break itself, unless the bird is bad indeed, then he must have speedy relief.

They have sometimes yellow scabs about their heads, and sometimes their eyes; when this distemper spreads, nothing but time and cooling food will carry it off.

*Several extraordinary Remedies for the Distempers before-mentioned.*

**I**T were to little purpose to know what distemper Canary-Birds are troubled with, unless you were acquainted with some things which might give them ease.

The first is the surfeit, which you will perceive by blowing up the feathers on the belly, it will be swelled, and if so far gone, it will be black. Give your

bird at first a great deal of whole oatmeal amongst his seed; repeat this three or four days, in order to cleanse him; put at the same time some liquorice in his water; but if you perceive him too laxative, instead of oatmeal give him maw-seed and bruised hemp-seed, because these are astringent. You may give him a little groundsel and saffron in his water. Boiled milk and bread, with maw-seed in it, is very good.

This is an excellent paste for a bird, either under the distemper called the surfeit, or the common swelling: take a small quantity of millet-seed, the same of hemp, as also of maw, rape and canary; let these just boil up, rince them in cold water, to cool them; then boil a new-laid egg hard, bruise the white and yolk together, take about a quarter of the egg, making it very small, put it to the seeds, and add as much more lettuce-seed as any of the others. Give this to your sick bird, and it will in all probability answer the desired effect. But you must observe, in the morning early before you give this composition, to let your bird drink two or three times water in which you have put some treacle, which you may order thus;

thus; take out your leaden pot or glass over night, when your bird is at rest, put the quantity of two peas of treacle in his water, but let his water be clean from any thing else, and when you have observed him drink two or three times, take out the water and treacle, rince your pot and put in some clean water; this do three or four mornings before you give him the above-mentioned composition.

*How to order them when in Moul.*

**W**ARMTH and good nourishing food are of the most use in this distemper, for that reason let your birds be where the sun shines very strong on them; or if it does not, let your place or cage be kept very warm during the whole time of their moult; let them be where no wind can come to them, for the least cold may chance to kill them. Give them Naples-biscuit, bread and egg, bruised hempseed, lettuce-feed, and maw-feed; and in their water, put a little saffron. If the weather is very hot, during the time of their moult, leave out the saffron, instead of which  
steep

steep a small piece of liquorice, and give them plantain and lettice-seed together. The reason so many things are prescribed is, that sick birds, as well as sick men, ought to be humoured with what pleases them, which often proves the best physic; if your bird should be very bad, let him have Naples bisket steeped in white wine, and force a small drop down their throats, finely tempered in your mouth; this last must not be used, unless his case be dangerous. When your Canary-bird is troubled with the little pimple on his rump, called the pip, and you observe tokens of sickness in him, when it is ripe and full of matter, take the point of a fine needle, and let out the matter with as much gentleness as you can; squeeze it all out; afterwards, by taking a bit of sugar moistened in your mouth, and put on the sore, will heal it. There is a distemper that sometimes comes on their heads, which is a yellow kind of scurf, and if full of matter, is covered with little scabs; this must be supplied with oil of sweet almonds, sweet lard, fresh butter, as it comes out of the churn, without salt or capon's grease; anoint it with any of these things, and administer the  
same



same food, as lettuce-seed, &c. As I have in some places prescribed cooling or cleansing things, and in others what is warm, dry, and nourishing. I think it not amiss to explain myself, first, as to what is cooling, as chick-weed, but be not over lavish in this, give plantain and lettuce, or either of these, and some scalded rape-seed, and put a small quantity of whole oatmeal in their common hard seeds, and for their drink, water with a small bit of stick liquorice in it.

All these are fine cooling things, but must only be given in proper seasons, that is, when the spring is pretty forward, just before breeding time, or in extream hot weather, but do not continue these above two or three days, lest you make them scour too much, which if you do, draw some of their tail feathers, put saffron in their water, maw-feed in the tin pan, turning the drawer you put the victuals in upside down, covering all the top of the drawer with nothing but bruised hemp-seed. This is a sovereign remedy for a looseness, though some will give them a head of groundsel.

The only nourishing and drying food, is Naples bisket alone, or mixt with hard egg.

Bruised

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Bruised hemp seed, millet-seeds, maw-seeds, bread and eggs, and rape-feed mixt together, the rape-feed being scalded, to mix the better with the bread and egg, in the same manner as I have directed several times before. While the cold winter season lasts, let them have sufficient of these warm and nourishing things; and now and then a little saffron in their water.

There are some that make use of several things not here mentioned, which is more the effects of fancy than good judgment; and by such sort of practices overdo the business, by killing their birds with what is not proper for them, which makes out an old English proverb, that "too much cooking spoils the broth."

### *The* RED-BIRD.

**I**S commonly called a Virginia Nightingale, they are very plenty in Virginia; they sing a very pretty song something like our English Nightingale, but not so well; they are very beautiful birds, and of a pretty large size, and almost as  
big

big as a small thrush; they are of a very fine red upon the breast, and have a red tail, and a very fine large topping on their heads, they are all over of a reddish colour; they catch them in Virginia, in the snow, with a snare, as we do Larks here in England; they sweep the snow away, and bait the place with Virginia wheat, or the chaff of it, as we do with chaff or oats for Larks in England; when they take them, they commonly feed them with Virginia wheat. When we have them in England, we feed them with hemp and canary-seed; if you can break them off the hemp, and feed them on canary, it is the best. I keep them in a large cage, and give them a little Wood-lark's meat in the pan, and now and then a little of our Nightingale's food, especially in the time of moulting; or if they should be sick, I give them a spider or a meal-worm.

The cock is of a very beautiful colour, and the hen more pale. The hen sings finer than the cock, but not so loud nor so long. I have known several attempted to breed them here in England, but not to perfection.

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